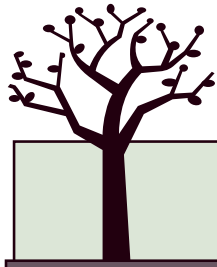


Natural Yard Care Through the Seasons



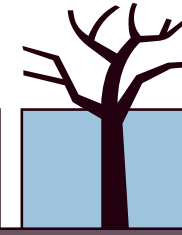
Spring March-May



Summer June-August



Fall September-November



Winter December-February

Flower and Vegetable Gardens

- Prepare new planting beds and gardens by mixing in 2-4 inches of compost.
- Pull weeds when they first start growing, while soil is moist and roots are short, before they go to seed.
- Buy plants that resist disease and use less water.
- Pest problems? Call the Natural Lawn & Garden Hotline, 206-633-0224, for advice.

- Mulch flower and vegetable beds with compost or grass clippings to conserve water and control weeds.
- Use fabric row covers to keep pests off sensitive vegetables.
- Identify bugs before you spray, squash, or stomp – they may be "good bugs" that eat pests.

- Pull weeds in beds when ground is moist and before they develop deep roots.
- Mulch garden beds with leaves or compost to reduce winter weeds and feed the soil. Or plant winter cover crops in open beds.
- Prepare new planting areas by digging in compost.

- Rake winter leaf mulch back onto beds if winds blow it off.
- Weed beds once during winter to prevent weeds going to seed.

Tree and Shrub Beds

- Prepare new tree and shrub beds by mixing compost into the whole bed (not just planting holes). Or plant trees in native soil and mulch well.

- Mulch shrub and tree beds with wood chips, leaves, or bark once a year to conserve water, reduce weeds, and feed the soil.

- Mulch tree and shrub beds with leaves, wood chips, or bark.
- Plant trees, shrubs, and many perennials in the fall to give them a good start.

- Prune fruit trees and other woody trees and shrubs while they're dormant (December-February).

Lawns

- Start mowing, about 2 inches high for most lawns, or 1 inch for bentgrass lawns. "Grasscycle" – leave the clippings for free fertilizer.
- For lawns in poor condition: aerate, overseed, and top-dress with 1/2 inch of compost.
- Fertilize lawns if needed in late May with "natural organic" or "slow release" fertilizer.

- Mow regularly, and leave the clippings on the lawn.
- Keep mower blades sharp to reduce lawn stress and brown tips.
- Consider saving water by letting some lawn areas (ones that don't get heavy traffic) go brown and dormant until fall.

- Improve thin areas of lawns in September - October by aerating, overseeding, and top-dressing with compost.
- Fertilize lawns with "natural organic" or "slow release" fertilizer in September to develop healthy roots and crowd out weeds.
- Plant new lawns September 1 – October 15, to give them the best start before next summer.

Watering

- Prepare sprinkler systems by testing, adjusting, and repairing leaks.
- Lay out soaker hoses in beds, and cover with mulch.
- Check soil moisture at plant roots before watering – don't water until they need it.

- Start and re-check watering systems, and adjust for weather. (Don't water when it rains.)
- Water lawns 1 inch per week, or let go brown and dormant (but water enough to moisten root zone once a month).
- Water at dawn or in evening to reduce evaporation.

- Adjust watering for cooler weather in September.
- When rains come, shut off and drain watering systems.
- Put away exposed soaker hoses, or re-cover with mulch if left out.

Composting

- Harvest compost from your bin. Throw any uncomposted sticks or stalks back in for another cycle.

- Add yard debris to compost pile; water pile to keep it moist. Place pile in shade or cover to hold moisture.

- Clear out annual garden growth and compost it for spring. Keep pile as moist as a wrung-out sponge.

Winter is the time to plan for spring.

- Tune up yard equipment; sharpen mower blades.
- Plan drip irrigation or soaker hoses for beds and containers to conserve water.
- Check storage areas for unwanted chemicals, and dispose safely. Call the Hazards Line at 206-296-4692 for disposal information.
- Plan to replace plants that have disease or pest problems.
- Call the Natural Lawn & Garden Hotline, **206-633-0224**, to ask questions and request free brochures to start planning for spring. Or read more at the web sites on the next page.

